

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

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TAGS: PORG, EAID, VN, VS

SUBJECT: COLOMBO PLAN AND VIETNAM

REF: COLOMBO 2244; COLOMBO 1575; COLOMBO 1539

(ALL AIDAC MESSAGES)

1. SUMMARY: COLOMBO PLAN DIRECTOR LEONORE STORAR
RECENTLY DISCUSSED WITH EMBASSY STATUS VIETNAM MEMBERSHIP
IN COLOMBO PLAN (CP) IN LIGHT OF THE RECENT MERGER
OF NORTH AND SOUTH. THERE MAY BE A PROCEDURAL PROBLEM
IN BRINGING THIS MATTER TO A RESOLUTION. END SUMMARY.

2. REFTELS DEALT WITH FINANCIAL PROBLEM OF COLOMBO PLAN
DIRECTORATE RESULTING FROM FAILURE OF LAOS, CAMBODIA
AND SOUTH VIETNAM TO PAY RECENT REGULAR ANNUAL ASSESSMENTS
AS MEMBERS OF THE COLOMBO PLAN. A SUPPLEMENTAL
ASSESSMENT WAS REQUESTED OF REMAINING MEMBERS TO MEET
THE SHORTFALL, AND THE US, TOGETHER WITH MANY OTHER
MEMBERS, RESPONDED AFFIRMATIVELY, AT LEAST FOR THIS
YEAR.

3. THE STATE OF PLAY HAS BEEN A BIT DIFFERENT IN THE
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CASE OF EACH OF THE INDOCHINA STATES. LAOS APPEARED

AT THE DECEMBER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN COLOMBO, AND LATER ADDRESSED A FORMAL REQUEST TO THE CP DIRECTOR THAT LAOS BE EXCUSED FROM PAYING ITS ANNUAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS BECAUSE OF ITS CURRENT FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES. IN SHORT, LAOS WOULD LIKE TO REMAIN A MEMBER FOR THE TIME BEING, WITHOUT BEING ASKED TO PAY. CAMBODIA HAS NOT ONLY REFUSED TO RESPOND TO COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE DIRECTOR, BUT THE MAIL HAS BEEN RETURNED "ADDRESSEE UNKNOWN". THIS MAY BE DUE AT LEAST IN PART TO THE FACT THAT THE DIRECTOR ADDRESSED THE CORRESPONDENCE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE KHMER REPUBLIC, INSTEAD OF DEMOCRATIC CAMBODIA OR KAMPUCHEA OR WHATEVER THE CURRENT OFFICIAL NAME OF THE COUNTRY MAY BE. HOWEVER, ONE MIGHT ASSUME THAT THE PRESENT HIGHLY XENOPHOBIC CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE SUPREMELY DISINTERESTED IN MEMBERSHIP IN THE COLOMBO PLAN.

4. MAIL ADDRESSED BY THE DIRECTOR TO SOUTH VIETNAM HAS ALSO BEEN RECENTLY RETURNED. SOUTH VIETNAM HAS NOW BEEN MERGED INTO THE LARGER GEOGRAPHICAL ENTITY KNOWN AS THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. LEONORE STORAR, CP DIRECTOR, RECENTLY CALLED ON DCM FOR UNOFFICIAL DISCUSSION OF THE CASE OF VIETNAM. SHE HAD ALSO DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH THE DEPUTY UK HIGH COMMISSIONER.

5. FHM EXPRESSED THE PURELY PERSONAL OPINION THAT THE LESSER HAVING BEEN SWALLOWED INTO THE GREATER, THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE FORMER WOULD NOT ACCRUE TO THE LATTER WITHOUT A NEW APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP. MS. STORAR RECALLED THE CASE OF SINGAPORE, WHICH, WHEN IT LEFT ITS FEDERATION WITH MALAYSIA, DID IN FACT APPLY AS A NEW MEMBER FOR WHAT AMOUNTED TO REINSTATEMENT OF ITS FORMER MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORGANIZATION. SHE SUGGESTED THAT WHILE THE PARALLEL WAS BY NO MEANS EXACT, THIS MIGHT BE TAKEN AS SOMETHING OF A PRECEDENT. DCM EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT PRESENT VIETNAMESE LEADERSHIP WOULD HAVE MUCH INTEREST IN CP MEMBERSHIP, UNLESS IT COULD BE CONVINCED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF TANGIBLE BENEFITS IN OUTSIDE AID. DIRECTOR POINTED TO THE PROBLEM OF HOW TO BRING THE MATTER TO A HEAD IN TIME TO HAVE A NEW AND APPROPRIATE ALLOCATION OF BUDGET EXPENSES BY THE TIME OF THE NEXT ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING IN DECEMBER.

6. ONE WAY OF MOVING TOWARDS RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM WOULD BE FOR INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR ADLINSJAH

JENIE, CURRENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT, SOUND OUT VIETNAMESE CHARGE LE BAO AS TO ATTITUDE OF HIS GOVERNMENT TOWARD CONTINUED CP MEMBERSHIP. OBVIOUSLY, JENIE HAS NO MANDATE FROM THE COUNCIL TO DO SO, AND ANY SUCH SOUNDING WOULD BE PURELY PERSONAL AND INFORMAL. THIS MAY WELL TAKE PLACE; THIS EMBASSY SEES NO REASON TO GET INTO THE ACT BY COUNSELING OR CONSULTING JENIE ON THE MATTER. OF COURSE, SUCH SOUNDINGS MAY WELL PROVE FRUITLESS, IF VIETNAM SIMPLY FAILS TO RESPOND. PURPOSE OF PRESENT MESSAGE IS SIMPLY TO ALERT DEPARTMENT TO THE PROBLEM WELL IN ADVANCE OF ANY FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. PERHAPS THE WHOLE SUBJECT OF THE STATUS OF THE THREE INDOCHINA STATES SHOULD BE AMATTER FOR THE DECEMBER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. ALLOWANCES MIGHT ALSO BE MADE FOR THE DEVELOPING STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN VIETNAM AND AT LEAST THE ASEAN STATES AMONG THE CP MEMBERSHIP.

7. INCIDENTALLY, MS. STORAR SAID THAT THE NEXT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN DECEMBER IS EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE IN MANILA. HOWEVER, NO POSITIVE ACTION HAS AS YET BEEN TAKEN BY THE MARCOS GOVERNMENT TO APPROVE HOSTING THE MEETING. SHE IS A BIT PERTURBED AT FAILURE TO HAVE CONFIRMATION FROM MANILA ON THIS POINT, SINCE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF LEADTIME WILL BE REQUIRED FOR PLANNING THAT MEETING.
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